
THE
CHRISTIAN REFORMER,
OR
Evangelical Miscellany.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. PAUL.

VOL. I. HARRISBURG, OCTOBER 1, 1828. **No. 4.**

**ON THE INFERIORITY OF CHRIST TO THE
FATHER.**

(Concluded from our last number.)

V. We now proceed to give a condensed view of our arguments in support of the doctrine, that Jesus Christ is *in every respect inferior to the Father*, and that therefore, he cannot be the true God.

1. Jesus has no where taught that he was God,—that he was equal with the Father,—or that he possessed two natures; but Jesus has told us that he came into the world “to bear witness to the truth;” (John xviii. 37,) if then these doctrines had been *true*, they must have been the *most important truths*, and he *would have taught them* in every form, and with the *utmost plainness* of language; but *he has not taught them at all*, therefore one of these conclusions necessarily follows, and let the Trinitarian take which he pleases: either, first, That Jesus was not a faithful witness to the truth; or, secondly, that the doctrine of his Deity and equality with his father, is not a truth at all, but a fiction of the schools; invented long after the pure age of Revelation. We adopt the latter conclusion, and are fully satisfied it can never be subverted.

2. The *highest titles* that Jesus ever gave himself, or permitted others to give him, were those of *Son of man*, *Son of David*, and *Son of God*. But none of these imply *equality* with the Father, therefore, we infer that Jesus is not the true God. I am aware, that some persons think that the title *Son of God*, necessarily supposes that he is of the *same nature* with God, and, therefore, must be equal with him. But this argument, like many used by Trinitarians, proves too much, (for all christians are called *sons*

of God,) and, therefore proves nothing: and would certainly never have been resorted to, had they not been hard pressed for reasons in support of their hypothesis. For the phrase *Son of God*, as necessarily supposes him to be inferior to, and dependant on the Father, as the title Son of man. But lest I should be accused of reasoning inconclusively; I will support this part of my position, by the arguments of a learned *Trinitarian*, Dr. Clarke, one of the most eminent ministers of the Methodist Church.

The following are his words;—"Here, I trust, I may be permitted to say, with all due respect for those who differ from me, that the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* of Christ is, in my opinion, anti-scriptural and highly dangerous; this doctrine I reject for the following reasons:

1st. "I have not been able to find any *express* declaration in the scripture concerning it.

2dly. "If Christ be the Son of God as to his divine nature, then he cannot be *eternal*: for *son* implies a *father*; and father implies, in reference to the *son*, *precedency* in time, if not in *nature* too. *Father* and *Son* imply the idea of generation; and generation implies a *time* in which it was effected, and a time also *antecedent* to such generation.

3dly. "If Christ be the Son of God, as to his divine nature, then the Father is of necessity *prior*, consequently *superior* to him.

4thly. "Again, if this divine nature were begotten of the Father, then it must have been *in time*; that is, there was a period in which it did not exist, and a period in which it began to exist. This destroys the *eternity* of our blessed Lord, and robs him at once of his Godhead.

5thly. "To say that he was *begotten* from all *eternity*, is in my opinion, absurd; and the phrase *eternal son*, is a positive self-contradiction. *ETERNITY* is that which has no *beginning*, nor stands in any reference to *TIME*. *Son* supposes time, generation and Father; and time also antecedent to such generation. Therefore the conjunction of these two terms, *Son* and *eternity*, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and *opposite* ideas.

"The enemies of Christ's divinity have, in all ages, availed themselves of this incautious method of treating this subject, and on *this ground*, have ever had the *advantage* of the defenders of the Godhead of Christ. The doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* destroys the Deity of Christ." See Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on Luke 1. 35.

For this masterly chain of reasoning we thank the Doctor. He has effectually wrested from Trinitarians the argument in favour of the Deity of Christ, supposed to arise from his Sonship; and unwillingly, perhaps, to himself, has supported the Unitarian arguments in favour of his *inferiority in every respect to the Father*. For if the title *Son of God* be the highest title HE ever gave himself, or permitted others to give him, it follows that he is not the *true God*, since this title necessarily implies *inferiority and dependence*.*

3. If Jesus be a *distinct person* from the Father, which is admitted by all, it necessarily follows that he cannot be *equal* with the Father; for then there would be *two Gods*, which would contradict the express and uniform doctrine of the scriptures, that there is *only one God*.

4. Jesus cannot be equal to the Father, because it was necessary that he should receive from the Father the Holy Ghost, or supernatural gifts, in order to consecrate and fit him for his work as the Messiah. John iii. 34. This circumstance, which is usually passed over, is of itself sufficient to overturn the Trinitarian hypothesis, and to establish the doctrine of the *absolute dependence* of Jesus upon the Father. Let us show its application.

According to the Trinitarian doctrine, the human nature of Jesus was in union with the second person of the Trinity, from the moment of its first formation; and in consequence of this *supposed* personal union, which was of the closest and most indissoluble kind, the human nature *must* have been possessed, from the very first, of whatever divinity could confer upon it. I ask then, what need a person, already in union with the supreme Deity, could have for the communication of the Holy Spirit? Was not the Son, equal in dignity with the Father, sufficient to fill the human nature, to which he had united himself, with wisdom, knowledge, and every qualification necessary for the work to be performed? Could the third person of the Trinity confer any thing which the second had not already conferred? Could any thing be added to him who was already in strict personal union with the Deity? Impossible. The very idea is contradictory and absurd;

* The exclamation of Thomas "my Lord and my God"! we shall show, when we come to notice objections, was not addressed to Jesus Christ, and is therefore no exception to our reasoning above.

therefore the scheme that supposes and labours under this contradiction ought to be rejected, as equally repugnant to scripture and reason. But upon the principles of Unitarianism, this is both consistent and natural. For unless Jesus had received divine communications, which is what we understand by "the Spirit being given to him *without measure*," he would have been unqualified for the great and arduous task assigned to him.

5. We read that "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*" Luke ii. 52. If our minds were unbiassed by any human system, we should naturally conclude from these words, that the understanding of Christ opened by degrees, and received accessions of knowledge according as he advanced in age; and that as his dispositions were excellent, he was equally in favour with God and man. I say, this would be our unbiassed conclusion, but it would subvert the Deity of Christ, by showing that he was not *omniscient*, and therefore not God.

Let the Trinitarian attempt to shape or modify these words of Luke into a consistency with his scheme. If Jesus was God and man in *one person*, if the divinity was closely and inseparably united to the *humanity*, how could Jesus be said to have *increased* in wisdom? As a divine person he must have been possessed of that attribute in an infinite degree. He must have known from the very first all that it was possible for him to know, and could have received no *increase* in wisdom from his intercourse with mortals. If it shall be said, that the divinity gradually revealed and manifested itself to the humanity as it grew up: I answer, that this reply will not serve the purpose; for the divinity and humanity are declared to be *ONE PERSON* from the *very first*, and as such must have been in possession of *divine wisdom*, from the commencement of that union; unless, indeed, it be admitted that Jesus was composed of *TWO PERSONS* as well as *two natures*. We conclude, therefore, that Jesus *is inferior to the Father*, because his wisdom was limited and admitted of *increase*.

6. We are told, "*that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.*" Matt. iv. Heb. iv. 15.—Had the apostle Paul believed that the *ONE PERSON* of Jesus Christ was *God and man*, would he have spoken in this manner? Would he not rather have resented even the insinuation of his liability either to be tempted or to sin?

—And may we not imagine, that he would have used such language as the apostle James has done to show the utter impossibility of such a supposition, “GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL”! We ask, can *any thing be a temptation* to Omnipotence, and infinite purity?

7, On one occasion, (Matt. xvi. 13,) our blessed Master asked his disciples the following interesting question: “*Whom do men say, that I, the Son of man am?*”? Let us attend to this query, it is an important one. It is observable, that at the same time that Jesus asks a solution of it, he styles himself *the Son of man*. As if he had said,—“You all know, that I Jesus am *a man*, of the same nature and species with yourselves. As such I have always appeared among you, and *never laid claim to any higher nature* or character; but as to my *office* or designation, what is the opinion of those with whom you are conversant, and whose sentiments you have had occasion to hear?”—“And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

Let us attentively consider the force, and ascertain the meaning of Peter’s answer to our Master’s inquiry, which received the fullest approbation from Jesus himself. It may lead us into the true notion of our Lord’s person and character, and thus settle the controversy on this important subject. Peter certainly understood, at the time, the true character of his Master, or Jesus would not have applauded him so much for his reply, or ascribed his knowledge and declaration to divine revelation. Now observe, that Peter, though inspired on this occasion, and called upon to give a precise definition of his Master, does not say, that he was Jehovah, or God, or equal with God, or that he was God-man in *two natures* and *one person* for ever; but simply asserts, that he was *the Christ, the Son of the living God*. Words which, when scrutinized and examined according to the strictest rules of fair criticism, can imply nothing more, than that Jesus was *a man anointed and beloved or approved of God*, and sent into the world as his Messenger to men. This explanation is confirmed by the remark which Peter made in his first sermon after receiving the gifts of the Spirit; Acts ii. 22. “Jesus of Nazareth, *A MAN APPROVED of God* among you, by mir-

acles, and wonders, and signs, which GOD DID BY HIM in the midst of you."

This we consider to be the natural construction of this important passage, but it may perhaps be useful to suggest the following hints. 1. Here Jesus is plainly distinguished from the living God, he cannot therefore be God in the highest sense of that word, without maintaining a *plurality* of Gods. 2. Jesus cannot be the *living God himself*, for *he died*, and was raised from the dead by the power of the Father. 3. Jesus is said to be the *Son* of the living God, he cannot, therefore, be that living *God* whose *Son* he is. 4. In whatever sense the phrase *Son of God* is used, whether as referring to his *nature* or *office*, we have already shown (Reason 2) implies *dependence*, and consequently *inferiority* to the Father. The diligent student of the New Testament will find that the Confessions of faith recorded in that book respecting Christ, bear no kind of resemblance to modern Confessions of faith. Let him read John xx. 31. Acts viii. 37. 1 John ii. 22, 23. & iv. 15. & v. 1, 5.

8. I will now bring before my readers a view of a very affecting scene, which it will be very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to account for, on any other principle than that of the *strict* and *proper humanity* of Jesus. I allude to the painful and melancholy apprehensions which he experienced in the garden of Gethsemane, in the immediate view of his sufferings and death. "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*" (Matt. xxvi. 38.)—Mark says "He began to be *sore amazed*, and to be *very heavy*," (Mark xiv. 33.) "And being in *an agony*, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling on the ground." Luke xxii. 44.

On supposition that our Lord Jesus Christ was a *man*, in the common acceptation of the word, all this was natural, and only what we might have expected from him, in the prospect of sufferings so acute. But on the Trinitarian supposition, that he was *God* and *man* in ONE PERSON FOR EVER, this whole scene becomes utterly inexplicable. For we cannot suppose for a moment that a being in *personal union* with the Deity could have suffered at all; for the divine nature in him would have so supported and strengthened the humanity as to have destroyed all sense of pain and suffering.

But on the Trinitarian supposition, what shall we say to

the following passage? "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, STRENGTHENING HIM." Luke xxii. 43. Strengthening whom, I would ask? Him who was God and man?! An angel sent from heaven to *strengthen omnipotence*?! Is it possible that rational men should adopt and pertinaciously adhere to a system, which involves the absurdity, that a *creature* was sent from heaven to support and *strengthen* the *Creator* of all things!!

Let us bless God, my Unitarian readers, that we are delivered from a system so utterly at variance with scripture—reason—and common sense. And let us "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and take care, that we are not entangled again in the yoke of bondage!"

9. Jesus Christ is not, and cannot rationally be supposed to be, the Most High God, or God in the sublime sense of the word, because he is in Scripture plainly *distinguished from God*. And though I have introduced this idea, before, I think it of importance to mention it again, for the sake of drawing the special attention of my readers to it, as it is of vast moment in this discussion. Now *distinction* always supposes *diversity*. *No being* can be *distinguished from itself*. And Jesus Christ being distinguished from God, in a vast number of places in scripture, every instance of which, ought to be considered as a plain and express denial, that he is God. We shall quote one, and refer to others. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things." 1 Tim. v. 21. Here we see God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and elect angels, mentioned together in a solemn abjuration; and yet plainly distinguished from one another, and spoken of as different and distinct beings, as they really are: so that there can be no pretence for *blending* and *confounding* them, which will not argue as strongly in favour of elect angels, as of our Lord Jesus Christ. See also 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

10. That our Saviour Jesus Christ is not the Most High God, or God in the proper and most sublime sense of that word, is evident, because, he always professed to have *no will of his own*; but to be ever entirely *guided* and *governed* by the will of his heavenly Father; "For I came down from heaven, not to do *my own will*, but *the will* of him that sent me." John vi. 38. See also John v. 30; and Matt. xxvi. 39. These expressions denote a state of ab-

solute *dependence* and *subjection*; and are utterly inconsistent with proper Deity. If our blessed Saviour had been God and man, *he must have been regulated solely by his own WILL*, and never could have been directed, *IN ANY SENSE*, by the will of another.

11. Jesus Christ cannot be the Most High God, or *equal* to him, because in innumerable passages, he is said "*to be sent of God.*" It is impossible to believe that a person *equal* in dignity to the Almighty, could be an ambassador from him. Besides, the idea of being sent, is quite inconsistent with that *sameness of essence*, which Trinitarians ascribe to the Father and the Son. The Son (upon their scheme) possessed the same *individual essence* with the Father, and therefore could not be *separated* from him, or act as his Messenger. Again, can an *omnipresent being*, be sent? If, in attempting to obviate the absurdity that arises from their view of this subject, Trinitarians should say, the *being sent* only applied to the *humanity* of Christ; it is replied, that this notion would destroy the *personal union*, between the divine and human natures, and reduce their system to the proper Unitarian scheme.

12. Jesus Christ is not the Omnipotent God, because he ascribes the *power*, by which he performed his miraculous works to the Father, or to the Holy Ghost, which, in most places of scripture, signifies nothing else but the power, influence or energy of God the Father. "I can of *mine own self do nothing.*" John v. 30. "The *Father* that dwelleth in me, *he doeth the works.*" John xiv. 10. See also John v. 19—31. Matt. xii. 28. Luke xi. 20. Acts ii. 22; & x. 38.

Permit me to ask, Could a being that is the true God of heaven and earth, ever express himself in such language as this,—"*I CAN OF MINE OWN SELF DO NOTHING?*" The idea is impossible, and cannot for a moment be admitted. Vain and futile, therefore, are all the evasions and false conclusions of the Trinitarians. It is quite idle and trifling to have recourse to the *pretended* distinction of two natures to get rid of this perplexing difficulty. If Jesus really had a divine and human nature, why does he not appeal to this divine principle, as the natural and proper author of his miraculous works? What occasion had he for the assistance of the first and third persons of the supposed Trinity, who was already in *personal union* with the

second, which, upon this scheme, is equal in dignity and power with the other two.

13. Our Saviour Jesus Christ is *inferior* to God and *dependent* upon him, because he is said to *receive commands* from the Father, and to give an unreserved *obedience* to those commands. "As the Father gave me *commandment*, even so I do." John xiv. 31. "If ye keep my *commandments* ye shall abide in my love, *as I have kept my Father's commandments*, and abide in his love." John xv. 10. See also Johu xii. 49, 50.

Whoever receives commandments from another, acknowledges that other person *his superior*, and as having a natural title to his obedience. Jesus possesses, not in a single instance only, but in all his words and actions, to be guided by a sacred regard to his Father's commandments. What can more fully prove the sovereign authority of the Father, and the *inferiority* and *dependence* of our blessed Master, than these considerations?

14. Jesus Christ is not the Most High God, because he declares, that he is not the original *author* of the *doctrine* which he taught. "My doctrine is *not mine*, but *his* that *sent me*." John vii. 16. "The word which ye hear is *not mine*, but the Father's who sent me." John xiv. 24. See also John iii. 34; & viii. 28.

From these passages, it is evident to a demonstration, that all the precious truths which Jesus taught were derived from his Father; and consequently it must be extremely inconsistent to suppose him to be God, or equal with God. For in that case his *own* infinite wisdom must, and would have suggested to him every part of his doctrine; and he would have had no occasion to have been *taught* of the Father, to have *learned* of the Father, or to have *heard* of the Father, as he expressly declares he did. Nor will it avail the Trinitarians any thing, to have recourse to his *pretended* divine nature here; for Jesus does not appeal to any divine nature of his own, but to *the Father*, as the author of his wisdom and knowledge.

15. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, is evidently a *subordinate* and *dependent being*, because he *prays* to the Father. *Now prayer always implies a state of great subjection and inferiority. To talk of God praying to himself, or of one God praying to another God, or of the human nature praying to the divine nature, would be equally extravagant and absurd. Whoever prays to another, acknowledges that

being, to whom he prays, to be his superior; and as having something in his power to confer, which *he* who prays, does not possess. The circumstance, then, that Christ *prayed* to the Father, is an irrefragable proof of his inferiority and dependence.

16. We maintain that Jesus could not be the most high God, because he exclaimed during his sufferings upon the cross, "MY GOD, MY GOD, why hast thou forsaken me!" Matt. xxvii. 46.

Upon the Trinitarian scheme, it is absolutely impossible to suppose that Jesus ever uttered an exclamation of this kind. How could God leave or forsake Jesus, when he was, as they tell us, so closely united to him as to form *one person* with him. Was the *hypostatical* union, (as they call it) *dissolved* at this period, or was it *quiescent* when it had the greatest reason to exert itself? Was this exclamation addressed to the supposed divine nature of Jesus, or was it addressed to the Father? If the former is asserted, it will prove that Jesus was *two persons* and not one person; and that there was no *proper union* betwixt the two natures at all. If the latter is admitted, it will follow, that Jesus had no divine nature *of his own*, because *that* must have supported him without the assistance of the Father. This passage presents no difficulty upon Unitarian principles; for, although the Father's fulness dwelt in Jesus, yet that fulness formed no necessary part of his being; and he might for a time, and during the agonies of dissolving nature, be deprived of the sensible experience of it.

17. Jesus was evidently *inferior* to, and *dependent* upon the Father, because he declares that *he had not the disposal* of the highest places in his own kingdom. "To sit on my right hand and on my left is *not mine to give*, but it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of *my Father*." Matt. xx. 23.

Here I ask, Could Jesus be the true God, and yet not have the absolute direction and government in his own kingdom? It is in vain to say here, that Jesus speaks according to his human nature, for he positively asserts, that these places were not *his* (in any sense) to give, but that he must be guided by the Father in the disposal of them.

18. Our Saviour Jesus Christ is not the Most High God, but *altogether dependent* upon him, and subjected to his authority; because he is said in scripture himself to *have a*

God, a head, or superior, and to be the *possession* or property of God. "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." John xx. 17. "The head of Christ is God." 1 Cor. xi. 3. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 23. See also Ephes. i. 17; and Heb. i. 9. These texts afford a very clear proof that *proper Godhead* does not belong to Jesus Christ. He who has a God, and acknowledges him as such, as Jesus does repeatedly, *cannot be God himself*.

19. Jesus is *inferior* to the Father, in all respects, because he *derived his existence* from the Father. This appears from the title *Son of God* so frequently given to him. A son is dependent upon his Father for his existence, and is necessarily *posterior* in time. This idea is supported by such passages as these. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." If the Father *hath given* to the Son to have life in himself, then *his existence* was given by the Father. John v. 26. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I LIVE BY THE FATHER." Here Christ acknowledges that he was indebted to the Father not only for his *original* existence, but for the *continuance* of that existence. John vi. 57. He, therefore, who is indebted to another for his existence cannot be *the true God*, who is in himself *absolutely* independent of all others.

20. Jesus cannot be the most high God, because he denies that *he is good*, as *God is good*. "Why callest thou ME GOOD, there is NONE good but ONE, THAT IS GOD." Matt. xix. 16, 17. If our blessed Master had wished to be considered as God, or *equal* with God; he could not, with truth, have refused this title. But here we have a striking instance of the manner in which our Saviour "sought not his own glory, but the *glory of him that sent him*."

21. Jesus Christ is a being inferior to, and dependent upon the Omniscient Deity, because he declares, in the most solemn manner, that he *is ignorant* of the precise time of the day of judgment. "But of that day and that hour knoweth *no man*, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER THE SON, but THE FATHER." Mark xiii. 32. Matthew says, (xxiv. 36.) "But my Father ONLY."

There is no way of evading the force of this passage against the Trinitarian notions, but by assuming a position which would destroy the *moral character of our Lord* for

integrity and truth. And at this *great and tremendous risk*, do the advocates of this system attempt to obviate the difficulty arising from this text. Christ says that **HE** knows not the day, and that the **FATHER ONLY** knows it. Trinitarianism says, that **HE DOES** know the day **AS WELL AS THE FATHER.** Thus this system is at issue with Jesus Christ himself. Is it any wonder, *that infidelity spreads*, when the professed friends of Christ, adopt a method of defending *their* system, which, were it resorted to in support of any *worldly project*, would infallibly expose them to the marked condemnation of all honest and upright men!

22. Jesus Christ is not, and cannot be the *true God*, because *he himself*, in the most solemn manner, and on the most solemn occasion, when addressing **THE FATHER** in prayer, uttered the following words; "This is life eternal that they might know **THEE** the **ONLY TRUE GOD.**" John xvii. 3. Here the **FATHER**, not the divine nature, but the **PERSON OF THE FATHER**, in contradistinction from every person or being in the universe, is declared by Christ himself, to be the **ONLY TRUE GOD.** He, therefore, who maintains that any other *person* than the Father, is the *true God*, does it in direct opposition to the *express* and *unequivocal* testimony of Jesus Christ himself.

23. Jesus Christ is not the *true God*, because he declares in express and positive terms, *that there is one greater than himself.* "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto my Father; **FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I.**" John xiv. 28.

On this text, the *Unitarian* takes his stand, as on an immutable rock, from which he can never be removed. Whilst *he* maintains that the Son of God is in **EVERY RESPECT INFERIOR** to the **FATHER**, he has the *express language* of his Master to support him; which can never be said of any part of the Trinitarian system. It is a poor evasion to say, that Christ speaks here according to his *human nature*, whilst, notwithstanding, he was equal to the Father in his *divine nature.* For, on supposition that *he had* two such natures, yet as they are said to form **ONLY ONE PERSON**, the pronoun *I* includes *them both*; and thus proves that in both natures, Christ *was inferior* to the Father. It is most unjustifiable in our opponents to affirm, that Christ sometimes speaks according to his *supposed* divine, sometimes according to his human, nature; and at other times accord-

ing to both natures. This is turning the sacred scriptures into a riddle, shifting and changing the person of Christ in order to serve a turn. By the use of similar distinctions, all human language would be rendered precarious and uncertain; and no criterion would be left for distinguishing truth from error.

Finally—If ever there was a time when Christ *appeared* to be equal with the Father, a period will come when that appearance shall be done away; and when his *entire subjection* to, and *dependence* upon the Father shall be *openly manifested*, by “his delivering up the kingdom to God, **EVEN THE FATHER; THEN shall the SON ALSO be SUBJECT unto HIM that did put all things under him, that GOD**” (the FATHER) may be **ALL IN ALL.** 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. Having fulfilled his commission, he will resign up his authority to that Supreme Being from whom he received it; and *seated at his right hand*, he will remain the most glorious subject of the Father’s kingdom, for ever to enjoy the inexpressible pleasure of having been the honoured instrument, of conducting the human race from vice to virtue, and from pain and sorrow to immortal life and blessedness.

Here I pause; not because I have exhausted my stock of arguments; but because I am afraid of exhausting the patience of my readers. Let me conjure those, who have proceeded thus far, to re-persue this essay, and examine every article separately; and let them take this consideration along with them, that the writer of this article, and his friends, have no worldly motives in maintaining these views. Power, and honour, and pecuniary rewards, at least in this neighbourhood, are all on the other side of this question. They *have not*, they *cannot have* any motive for defending them, but a deep and solemn conviction of their truth,—a wish to restore christianity to its original purity and simplicity,—and an ardent desire to promote the honour of God, and the happiness of their fellow creatures. Now to the one God and Father of all; the sovereign independent, and unchangeable Jehovah, be ascribed all glory and praise, through Jesus christ, for ever. Amen.

PHILANTHROPOS.

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WAR INCONSISTENT WITH CHRISTIANITY.

A Dialogue.

Richard. How do you do neighbour Thomas? According to your friendly invitation, I have come to spend an hour with you this evening.

Thomas. I am very happy to see you. Be seated.

Rich. Thank you.

Thom. As you have now had an opportunity of reflecting on the subject of our last conversation, will you tell me what are your present thoughts upon it?

Rich. I will with pleasure. Though the subject was then new to me, and I rather assented to your remarks, from the difficulty I found in giving a candid answer to them; I have since been closely engaged in examining every thing that was then brought forward, and I am now satisfied, "*that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:*"—and I am also satisfied, that if it could be proved that war is either commanded—permitted—or encouraged, in the New Testament; that christianity would rather have been a curse than a blessing;—and that Christ, its benevolent author, ought rather in this case, to have been called the *Prince of discord and misery*, than "*the Prince of peace.*" I have almost thought, that our blessed Lord had an allusion to this delightful title of his, when he gave his parting blessing to his disciples in these affecting words, "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*" So opposite to every precept of Christianity, and to its whole spirit and tendency, does war now appear to me, that I feel ashamed I should ever have been its advocate.

Thom. Your remarks, friend Richard, do me good. Were all persons equally candid with yourself, every vestige of error and superstition, which we have "*derived by tradition from our fathers,*" would very soon disappear from our world. Little, very little, of the religion that is now professed, is deduced from the New Testament; but is rather taken at second hand, and on trust, either from our confessions of faith and creeds, or from books which detail the traditions of our forefathers.

Rich. I begin to think this is the case. For before the conversation we lately had on this subject, I had not the

smallest doubt, but that war, was not only *consistent with*, but even *encouraged* by christianity. This notion I derived from my parents, and found it supported, and even recommended by our ministers; so that I had no doubt whatever that it must be right: but this was a proof that I had never examined the subject for myself.

Thom. Yes, friend Richard, *that* is the true cause of the ignorance and errors that prevail in the world. Men do not examine truth for themselves. They neglect to comply with that apostolic command—“*Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*” Were all christians to obey this precept, they would soon discover, that many things which they now believe to be truths, would appear to be errors; and many practices which are now followed and encouraged, would appear to be in direct hostility, both to the precepts and the spirit of christianity.

Rich. One question has occurred to me since we first conversed upon this subject, which I should much wish to have answered. So far as my little historical knowledge goes, I find that war has been generally advocated by christians. Was it so from the beginning? Did the first christians, immediately after the death of the apostles, think it consistent with their profession to destroy one another, or even their pagan enemies and persecutors, by the sword?

Thom. It gives me great pleasure, friend Richard, to be able to answer this question in the most satisfactory manner; for I lately met with an author, who, in giving an account of the manners of the primitive christians, notices their views and practices with regard to war. From this work, I find, that pacific principles, were adhered to generally by christians for upwards of three centuries; being only abandoned, by the same gradation that truth, simplicity, and purity were abandoned also. It would not be difficult to prove, that there have *always* been found, in the ranks of christians, even in the darkest ages of the church, individuals who have steadily opposed this cruel practice; and almost from the era of the Reformation, one whole sect, has constantly opposed it, “through evil and good report,” and *uniformly* refused to co-operate, either directly or indirectly, in this anti-christian and cruel practice. The sect to whom I refer, is the Quakers or Friends. This people, in the midst of every species of evil which intolerance could inflict, have manifested more of the spirit

and manners of the primitive christians, than any other class of christians whatever. If you wish it, I will read you a few passages from the book I have referred to, from which you will learn, that war, like many other of the practices of this day, *rose out of the corruptions of christianity.*

Rich. It would give me great pleasure to hear them. I should be happy to learn, that there ever were a period, when christians resembled their master in abstaining from every thing injurious to society, and cultivating peace and happiness to the utmost extent of their power.

Thom. Before I read the paragraphs to which I have referred it may be proper to introduce the following observation. Neither Jews nor Christians could serve in the Roman legions without incurring the guilt of idolatry. The frequent sacrifices at which all were bound to assist, the homage paid to the standards, the military oath, which was renewed every year, all were idolatrous. Hence, before the time of Christ the Jews only acted as auxiliaries to the Romans, under their own officers; and they procured from Julius Cæsar an exemption from serving in the wars. But the objections of some of them were not only to idolatry, but to war itself. Philo says, of the Esseans, "None among them can be found that manufacture darts, arrows, swords, breastplates, or even such weapons as might be converted to bad purposes in time of peace; much less do they engage in any of those arts which are useful in war." It is not surprising, that this sect, possessing principles so similar to those which were taught by the founder of christianity, should generally have embraced it, when made known to them.

I now beg your attention to the following paragraphs, which clearly show that the first christians were decidedly opposed to *war* in all its forms. *Justin Martyr* (A.D. 140) in his first apology, quotes Isaiah ii. 4, and then observes, "That these things have come to pass, you may be readily convinced; for twelve men, destitute both of instruction and of eloquence, went forth from Jerusalem into the world, and by the power of God, gave evidence to every description of persons, that they were sent by Christ to teach all men the divine word; and we who were once slayers of one another, do not fight against our enemies."

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, (A.D. 167) discusses the same prophecy, and proves its relation to our Saviour,

by the fact, that the followers of Jesus had disused the weapons of war, and no longer knew how to fight.

Tatian, (A.D. 172) intimates plainly his opinion concerning the unlawfulness of war, and contrasts soldiers and christians as in all respects opposite.

Tertullian, (A.D. 200) in one part of his works, alludes to some christians who were engaged together with their heathen countrymen in military pursuits; but on another occasion, he informs us that many soldiers who had been converted to christianity, quitted those pursuits in consequence of their conversion; and he repeatedly expresses his own opinion that any participation in war was unlawful for believers in Jesus, not only because of the idolatrous practices enjoined on the soldiers in the Roman armies, but because Christ had forbidden the use of the sword and the revenge of injuries.

Origen, (A.D. 230) acknowledges the justice of the charge which *Celsus* brings against the christians of his day, "that they refused to bear arms for the emperor," and observes "We no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn any more to make war. We have become, for the sake of Jesus, the children of peace." In another place of the same work he observes, "we take no part in his (the emperor's) wars, though he urge us."

Under the reign of *Dioclesian* (A.D. 300) a large number of Christians refused to serve in the army, and in consequence of their refusal, many of them suffered Martyrdom.

Lactantius, (A.D. 306) says, "to engage in war cannot be lawful for the righteous man, whose warfare is that of righteousness itself."

Tarachus, the martyr, says in his examination, "When I was a soldier, I was called Victor;—because I became a christian, I renounced the service."

Martin, after his conversion to christianity, (A.D. 360) thus addressed the Emperor Julian, "I have fought for thee; permit me now to fight for my God. Let those who are about to engage in war accept thy donative; I am the soldier of Christ; for me, the combat is unlawful."

Thus you see, friend Richard, that for more than three hundred years after Christ, the generality of Christians, thought it totally inconsistent with their profession to engage in war, and therefore steadily refused it, though in many instances it cost them their lives.

Rich. I thank you sincerely for this account. I am

now fully satisfied, that war is opposed to every principle of Christianity, because it is inimical to the peace—the happiness—the purity and holiness of the human family; to accomplish which, was the great object of our Saviour's Mission, “who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” War is opposed to christianity, because it is opposed to the example of Christ. What would the world have thought, if the Lord Jesus Christ had placed himself at the head of an army, for the purpose of revenging the insults offered to the Jews by the Romans? Would not this, think you, have been a departure from all the principles of his religion? And is it not equally improper, for his disciples to act upon this principle? Let us then imitate him, “for he has left us an example that we should follow his steps!”

There is one passage of scripture, which I think you have never mentioned in our conversations, but which strikes me, as of great force on this subject. It is this—“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.” (Matt. x. 23.) From this text, in conjunction with other plain precepts, I reason thus;—If it were the duty of the immediate disciples of Christ to return good for evil—blessing for cursing—and to pray even for those who were in the act of depriving them of their inalienable birthright, the liberty of thought,—of speech,—and of action;—and if, rather than resist these unjust aggressions, they were directed to flee to other cities, or countries; it must be the duty of christians now, unless Christ has given us another law, by which he repealed these precepts, and authorized his disciples henceforward to maintain their rights and their principles by the sword. But this no one will attempt to prove. And the history of the christians, for more than three centuries after Christ, as you have read, clearly shows in what manner they understood their Master's precepts; for they patiently endured every species of insult and persecution, rather than deviate from the spirit of their religion.

Thom. This passage had escaped me. But you have applied it with great propriety, and I think your inference is irresistible. I see no way of evading its force, but by admitting, that the precepts of Christ are not obligatory upon men now, which would amount to the rejection of christianity altogether.

Rich. The discussion of this subject, has led me to conceive that christians in general have not proper views of persecution; sinse this vice has been as much practised by christians, as it ever was by pagans. I should be very happy, neighbour Thomas, to have your thoughts upon this subject.

Thom. With pleasure, friend Richard. But as it is growing late, and the subject is important, I would rather defer it to another opportunity. In the mean time, let us endeavor, in our respective neighbourhoods, to cultivate brotherly love and kindness. Let us show to the world, that the religion of the "Prince of Peace" is the friend of man, because it leads all its votaries to promote the peace and happiness of society. When we meet again, we will introduce the subject you mention. Farewell.



PLAIN THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.

ESSAY IV.

The nation of Israel were not made the people of God by sacrifices; but because he had taken them to be his people they were required to offer them. The sacrifices which were appointed to be offered, were not made the leading and most essential parts of their law, nor were they insisted on as of equal value and importance with the moral precepts of it. They were not the foundation of the covenant made at Sinai; but were used as a confirmation of it. They were never designed to make up for the want of moral purity and righteousness, and were insufficient for any such purpose. It is intended to illustrate and confirm these things in this and the following essays.

God chose the fathers of the Israelitish nation irrespective of sacrifices. He gave his promise to Abraham before he had erected any altar, or sacrificed any victim. Gen. xii. 2, 3. He was justified by faith, while yet uncircumcised, Rom. iv. 10; merely because he believed God and obeyed his voice. God chose his posterity, the house of Israel, redeemed them from the iron yoke of bondage, and entered into covenant with them, before sacrifices were instituted among them. This the narrative of the extra-

ordinary transactions in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and the consideration of what the tables of the covenant given at Sinai contained, fully show. God's having already shown himself their God, and redeemed them, was given as the reason why they should receive his law and obey him. *Exod. xx. 1, 2.*

Nothing can more plainly show that sacrifices did not constitute a leading and most essential part of the Jewish law, than the words of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you." *Jer. vii. 22, 23.* Here, what relates to sacrifices is placed in contrast with what, in the first instance, God commanded Israel, with that obedience which was essential to their continuing to be accepted with God as his people, and to their enjoying his favour; consequently what related to sacrifices could only be auxiliary to the more leading and essential parts of the law, and must have been subordinate in its value and importance. What the above text expresses is confirmed by what we find recorded of the same transaction in the book of Exodus. (See *chap. xv. 26, and xix. 3—6.*) "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." This appears to be the first revelation of his will, which God communicated to the people after he brought them out of Egypt; and it contains no mention of burnt-offerings or sacrifices. When Moses had made known this divine communication, "All the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," And it is added, "Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." In the above texts, God proposed the terms on which the house of Jacob

should be his peculiar people, and the whole people assented to the terms : yet in this most solemn transaction, on which so much depended, nothing is said about sacrifices; but surely had they been of that vital and fundamental consequence which many christians have supposed, it would have been otherwise. Had the Jewish sacrifices been typical of the death of Christ, as a satisfaction for sins, and had the leading design of the Mosaic economy been to point forward to his sacrifice as the only ground of salvation, it is natural to think the first thing concerning which God would have spoken to the people of Israel would have been sacrifices, and that the institution of them would have been the very foundation of the law.

Had sacrifices constituted a leading and most essential part of the Jewish law, had they not been of minor importance, it would seem very extraordinary that, when God declared that law with an audible voice, in the hearing of all the people, in the midst of the most awful indications of the divine presence and majesty, on Mount Sinai, so much of it as was declared should not contain a word about sacrifices. See Exod. xx. 1—17. The whole of what was afterwards written upon the tables of stone, called the tables of the covenant, which were placed in the ark, hence called the ark of the Covenant, is contained in the above passage, the words which God proclaimed on Sinai, in the hearing of the whole people of Israel. It is deserving of particular notice, that the law or covenant, so far as the people heard it pronounced by the voice of God, and so far as it was written on tables of stone, contained nothing relative to sacrifices: yet the law as so uttered and written, makes mention of God's showing mercy, yea, of his showing mercy unto thousands of generations. The word *generations*, though not supplied by the translators after *thousands*, as it is after the *third and fourth*, is as much implied in the one case as in the other; for the word *thousands* stands in contrast with the words *third and fourth*. If God's showing mercy depended upon expiatory sacrifices being offered to him, is it not natural to think something would have been said about such sacrifices when he declared his will in such an extraordinary manner, and made particular mention of the persons to whom he would show mercy? He did not say, showing mercy to thousands of generations of them that offered expiatory sacrifices, or that trust in such sacrifices; but to them that love me and

keep my commandments. It is evident from the words of God, that in showing mercy he would not have regard to sacrifices; but to the moral state of those who needed it.

Will any one deny that God's uttering the ten commands with an audible voice, in the hearing of all the people, in the midst of such extraordinary and awful appearances, and his afterwards inscribing them on tables of stone, was intended to impress the people with their supreme importance? But if this cannot be denied, it follows, that what was not so expressed and written, was not intended to be placed in the same rank, in point of importance, in the Jewish economy. In the giving of the law, it is undeniable, that the doctrine and exclusive worship of one God, and what was of a moral nature, was made the most leading and essential part, and had the highest proof of divine sanction and authority; and that what was ceremonial was designed as auxiliary and subordinate to the more essential parts, and the leading objects of that dispensation.

Many passages might be quoted from the prophets, in proof of the views suggested in the preceding remarks; but one only may for the present suffice. Micah. vi. 6—8: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, and with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, *but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*" No words can more strongly express, than the prophet has done in this passage, that sacrifices, however numerous and costly, are utterly inefficacious and valueless, any further than they subserve moral purposes, promote justice, mercy and piety. In themselves merely they can contribute nothing towards rendering sinners acceptable with God, or procuring his favour. The prophet does not rank them among the things which God requires of men, and which he hath shewn them to be good; because he required them only in particular circumstances, and for subordinate purposes. Viewed abstractly they were not good; they were only so relatively, in connexion with and subservience to what is moral. The above text regards man as a sinner; yet it

supposes sacrifices not to be necessary in order to his coming before God with acceptance; it implies that they would not be available in this respect, and asserts the whole of what God requires, of what he has shown man to be good, to be comprehended in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. These things might, or might not, have sacrifices connected with them; but they derive not their value and acceptableness from sacrifices; they are, and have always been in themselves, what God requires and approves.

Some Christians will allow that the Jewish sacrifices, viewed abstractly, were inefficacious and of no value; but they contend that they derive value and efficacy from their being types of the sacrifice of Christ, and that the worshippers under the law were to look through them to his sacrifice, as the only ground of their salvation. But how were those who were under the law to know that their sacrifices were types of the death of Christ? Moses gave them no information respecting the death of Christ; not the least hint of any such event can be found in any part of his law; nor did he tell them, when he appointed their sacrifices, that they were typical, and that they were to offer them believing in another and better sacrifice. He left them in total ignorance respecting this supposed necessary and only proper view of the subject, without which their sacrifices would be useless, and only tend to mislead them. None of the prophets after Moses, even when treating on sacrifices, ever told them their sacrifices were typical, *or reproved them for not looking through them to the sacrifice of Christ*, or gave them the least intimation on the subject. If the value and efficacy of the Jewish sacrifices depended on their being offered as types of the sacrifice of Christ, they could have no value nor efficacy as to those who offered them, because they could know nothing of the matter, having never been told that they were typical. The real use and design of sacrifices under the Law will be shewn in a future essay.

R. W.

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A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING.

TO THEE, ALMIGHTY LORD, we raise
Our hearts and hands in prayer and praise;
For all thy mercies plead and prove
Thy word is true, that—*God is love.*

How many dangers, woes and fears
Have pass'd like dreams of other years—
How many blessings from above,
Sound, as they fall, that—*God is love.*

That Pestilence, whose venom'd breath
Infus'd the very life of death,
The voice of Mercy bade "remove,"
And thus proclaimed, that—*God is love.*

The beauteous products of the soil,
The rich reward of honest toil,
To praise the Lord our tongues small move,
For these attest that—*God is love.*

Freedom her golden gift extends
To us, her faithful chosen friends;
The breeze of Health waves ev'ry grove,
And gently whispers—*God is love.*

Serene her light around us pours;
Religion triumphs—Faith adores;
While Peace, the heavenly turtle-dove,
Coos in soft strains, that—*God is love.*

CONDITIONS.

I. THE CHRISTIAN REFORMER, intended to promote a spirit of Free Enquiry and the practice of Piety and Virtue, will be published monthly, and contain 12 duodecimo pages—but should the number of subscribers warrant it, it will be increased to 24 pages, in the course of the year, without any additional charge.

II. Price, ONE DOLLAR a year, to be paid in advance. All communications to the Editor must be *post paid.*

Printed by G. S. Peters, Harrisburg, Pa.